THROUGH THE ROOF IN THE CHURCH
Reaching an Unchurched People Group
Presented by HOPE.network

“Faith has walked up the stairs that love has built and looked out the window that HOPE has opened.” (Charles Spurgeon)

- The Need
- The Barriers
- The Mandate
- The Response

1. **The Need or Why Should Our Church Have a Disability Ministry?**

   - 1 in 5 people have a disability
   - Worldwide 540 million people have disabilities...55 million in U.S.
   - In developing countries an estimated 97% of disabled children are denied even the most rudimentary rehabilitation services. In theses countries disable children suffer more violence and abuse than other children. They are imprisoned in institutions, cupboards and sheds and, all too often, starved to death.
   - 98% of folks with disabilities are unchurched
   - 85% of marriages end in divorce when a special needs child is born.

**Question for Reflection:**

Do individuals with disabilities need Jesus less than anyone else?
How about their family’s need of Jesus?

- The fact is they don’t have greater or less need for Jesus, but they may need more help getting to Him.

“A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Some men came bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” (Mark 2:1-5)
Points to remember:

In ancient times, in countries outside of Israel, people with disabilities were killed. While the Israelites allowed them to live, they were the outcasts of society and lived on the fringe of the city and fended for themselves as best as they could. The four men who brought the paralyzed man were more than just passersby; they were friends of this man.

We need to bring individuals with disabilities to the feet of Jesus. But before we earn the right to do this, we need to invest in their lives and build a community of caring for them and their families.

The greatest accommodation that we can make for people with disabilities is FRIENDSHIP.

CIRCLES OF SUPPORT:

Typical:

Circle of Intimacy:
Mom, Dad, sister, brother, grandmother, grandfather, aunts, uncles, cousins

Circle of Friendship:
Typical people have many friends at work, at school, at church, and in the clubs and activities in which they participate.

Circle of Participation:
Typical children participate in many activities...school, sports (soccer, track, basketball, football, golf, swimming, lacrosse etc.), clubs.

Circle of Exchange:
Typical children have many activities in their day-to-day lives where they interact with many different people. I.e. Starbucks, Super Market, Barnes and Nobel, Taco Bell, Lacrosse, bankers, post office, mall, concerts, retail merchants, restaurants, movies
Circle of Support

First Circle: Circle of Intimacy
Second Circle: Circle of Friendship
Third Circle: Circle of Participation
Fourth Circle: Circle of Exchange

Bill
Helper Holy
Homework
Post Office Pinal
Church
Computer Child
Chick Fila
Circuit Child
Chick Fila
Chick Fila
Movie Theatre
Restaurant Run
Youth Life
Indoor Team
Baseball Team
Soccer Team
Lacrosse Team
Steve Melissa
Sean
Derek
Mom
Will
Dave
Doctor
Dane
Chris
Storm
Kevin
Kirk
Teddy
Tea Bell Tim
Jaco Bell Tim
Noble Bob
Mainty
Mr.
Super Market Stephen
Kirk
Instructor Ken
Teacher Tom

Fourth Circle: Circle of Intimacy
Circle of Support

First Circle: Circle of Intimacy
Second Circle: Circle of Friendship
Third Circle: Circle of Participation
Fourth Circle: Circle of Exchange
Ownership vs. Obedience

Responsible people motivated by an attitude of ownership.

Problem:

When things go wrong it causes stress and anxiety. When things go well, it causes pride

- Their needs are different than ours.

FACT: We all need to laugh, love be accepted, be respected, have friends and dream.

D. Fear
- Will they hurt me/my child?
- I don’t know how to treat them...I don’t know how to be with them.

God’s Answers to our excuses:

1. Show our love in action and truth. (1 John 3:17-18)
2. Love your neighbor. (Gal. 5:13)
3. Carry each other's burdens (Gal. 6:2)
4. Sow generously (2 Cor. 9:6-7)
5. Do not grow weary in well-doing (Gal. 6:9-10)
E. Communication:

The Ten Commandments of Communicating with People With Disabilities:

I. Speak directly to the person with a disability rather than through a companion or sign language interpreter.

II. Always offer to shake hands when introduced.

III. Always identify yourself and others who may be with you when meeting someone who is blind.

IV. If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen, wait or ask for instructions.

V. Treat adults as adults.

VI. Do not lean against or hang on someone’s wheel chair or cart. Bear in mind that people with disabilities treat their chairs as extensions of their bodies.

VII. Listen attentively when talking with people who have difficulty speaking and wait for them to finish.

VIII. Place yourself at eye level when appropriate while speaking with someone who has a disability.

IX. Tap a person who is deaf on the shoulder or wave your hand to get his or her attention.

X. Relax; don’t be embarrassed by using common expressions that seem to relate to a person’s disability.

Taken from “Ten Commandments of Communicating with People with Disabilities”. For more information go to www.disabilitytraining.com

3. The Mandate:

- Welcome people with disabilities

Luke 14:12...”When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

- People with disabilities have gifts that are essential to the body of the church
1 Corinthians 12:21-23...The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don’t need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special are treated with special modesty...

1 Corinthians 12:7...Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

- Christ is allowed to work in and through people with disabilities and the church becomes witnesses to His power.

2 Corinthians 12:9..."My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

John 9:1-3b...As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"
Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus," but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life"...

Philippians 4:13...I can do all things through Him who gives me strength.

4. The Response:

Every individual has physical, social, emotional and spiritual needs. Secular agencies can address the first three, but churches must meet the last.

- Welcome people with disabilities
- Invest in their lives and built a community of caring and love
- Introduce people with disabilities to Jesus
- Allow people with disabilities to use their spiritual gifts in the church
  - Danae’s example

Ultimately by doing these things and by investing in their lives, we will demonstrate God’s love and grace to them and their families.

We can then give them the opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel of Christ.

By integrating those with disabilities into the life of the church, we will see God at work, not only in their lives but our lives as well.

We will then be a witness to the community by what we do for people with disabilities, leading to more partnerships and more opportunities to see God at work.
HOPE.network Partnerships:

- Religious Needs Committee...DSO
- HOPE’s Angels Presentation...EFR Conference
- Capernaum Project.....Young Life Partnership
- Playgroup... Children First Partnership
- Trade Show...LEAH Conference
- HOPE’s Ambassadors
- HOPE’s Angels
Disability Website Resources

www.bbcmpls.org (Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN)

www.bcmintl.org (Bible Centered Ministries International--Handi*vangelism)

www.betterwaypress.com (*Lifeplanners monthly newsletter written by parents of a child with Down Syndrome*)

www.blhs.org (Bethesda Lutheran Homes and Services; Christian Resource Center)

www.ccfh.org (Christian Church Foundation for the Handicapped--Educational resources for disability ministry)

www.ccpd.org (The Christian Council on Persons with Disabilities)

www.childrenofdestiny.org (daily devotions and prayers for families who have special children)

www.dovetapes.com/als (archived sessions from annual McLean Accessibility Leadership Summit, McLean Bible Church)

www.eastpa@joniandfriends.org (Eastern PA part of Joni and Friends Ministry)

www.ephratarpc.com (Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ephrata--disability ministry)

www.faithability.org (religion and disability resources)

www.faithaliveresources.org (Christian Resources for people with cognitive impairments; part of Gospelcom)

www.family.org (Focus on the Family)

www.familylife.com (Family Life Ministry, part of Campus Crusade)

www.friendship.org (Friendship Ministry--tools for working with persons who have developmental disabilities; Friendship Groups)

www.hurdlinghandicaps.org (Larry Patton, inspirational speaker with Cerebral Palsy)
www.joninandfriends.org (Joni Eareckson Tada; A MUST USE RESOURCE!)

www.keyministry.org (disability awareness and training for churches)

www.lifeway.com (Lifeway Christian Resources)

www.mcleanbible.org (Access Ministry; annual Accessibility Leadership Summit)

www.namb.net (North American Mission Board, Disability Awareness: "Open to All" Campaign, etc.)

www.nathhan.com (Christian resources for homeschooling children with special needs)

www.nod.org (National Organization on Disability resources and links; "That All May Worship Conferences")

www.northsideonline.org (HOPE.network support group, HOPE Happenings newsletter)

www.shepherdsministries.org (Shepherds Ministry, Wisconsin)

www.specialtouch.org (Special Touch Ministry for persons with disabilities)

www.visionnewengland.org (Vision New England Disability Ministries; runs JAF Family Retreat in Greenfield, NH)

www.willowcreek.org (Willow Creek Community Church: Special Friends Ministry; Disabled Ministry; Living Stones small group)

www.younglife.org (CAPERNAUM Project)